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East Germany - West Germany: Pankow is preparing to enter into negotiations with Bonn.

Yesterday the East German parliament authorized both the Council of State, headed by party leader Ulbricht, and the government, headed by Premier Stoph, to take "the necessary measures" for establishing relations with West Germany. This suggests that the East Germans may propose negotiations on several levels.

Ulbricht last week had indicated that Pankow was willing to negotiate with Bonn and would not impose preconditions for beginning talks. Yesterday's action suggests that the East Germans may now believe that they must take the initiative. With Poland and other Eastern European states about to follow Moscow's example in negotiating bilaterally with the Federal Republic, the East German action is probably a defensive one. Even if there are high-level talks, no early breakthrough should be expected.

The parliament's resolution specified that relations between the two Germanies should be governed and secured by agreements valid under international law. Bonn, on the other hand, has indicated that it is only willing to accept "binding agreements" with the East Germans, but not formal state treaties. It insists that relations between East and West Germany must be of a special type.



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Western Europe: The signing earlier this week of the tripartite gas centrifuge agreement marks an important milestone for one of the most significant technological projects yet undertaken in Western Europe.

Although Britain, West Germany, and the Netherlands have independent programs to develop the gas centrifuge method of producing enriched uranium, they see advantages in a cooperative project. The UK views it as a way to express interest in Europe, the Dutch feel there is less financial risk in a cooperative venture, and Bonn hopes that the project will avoid the political repercussions a fully-developed independent German program could cause.

Since last June progress has been stalled by two problems--the location of the tripartite consortium's headquarters and the possible use by the UK of centrifuge-enriched uranium in weapons programs. A compromise was apparently reached on these issues [REDACTED]

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It is not clear how soon the tripartite project will get under way. The agreement must still be ratified by the participating states. In addition, the technical obstacles to implementation are formidable. As the centrifuge project develops, moreover, its relationship to the activities of EURATOM will have to be defined. It is possible that the tripartite centrifuge effort could eventually become one of EURATOM's joint enterprises, especially if Britain joins the European Communities. [REDACTED]

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Albania-Yugoslavia: Tirana has agreed to supply Albanian-language textbooks and teaching aids to the University of Prishtina, located in Yugoslavia's autonomous province of Kosovo.

This new university is an important part of Belgrade's policy of meeting the demands of ethnic Albanians for equality in the Yugoslav federation. There are few Albanian-language texts currently available in Yugoslavia, and Belgrade is taking a calculated risk that the forthcoming material will not contain anti-Yugoslav propaganda.

Until the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Hoxha regime was highly critical of Yugoslav policies toward the nearly one million Albanians living in Kosovo. Tirana has traditionally argued that the alleged plight of these Albanians is an obstacle to improved relations.

On the textbook issue Hoxha and company are demonstrating an unusual amount of movement. Officials at the University of Tirana have indicated that they would publish new editions of 60 textbooks upon request from Prishtina and would meet future requirements for assistance.

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Yugoslavia-Bulgaria: The ill-conceived visit of Bulgarian Foreign Minister Bashev to Belgrade last week has deepened the gulf that separates the two countries. The visit was clearly marred by disputes. According to Western press reports, Bashev's reiteration of Bulgarian claims to Macedonia as well as his support of the Brezhnev doctrine, which justifies Communist intervention in Communist countries, almost caused the talks to collapse at the beginning. They almost came apart again when President Tito publicly denounced unidentified critics, clearly the Bulgarians and Soviets, for attacks on Yugoslav domestic policies. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] as a result of all this there is only the prospect of increased cooperation in the economic field, and presumably even this has been relegated to the distant future.

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Burma: The Burmese Army in early December opened a major operation against Burmese Communists in the Chinese border area [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The operation, expected since the monsoon rains abated in October, was probably delayed until a newly-assigned elite division acquainted itself with the region. A concurrent drive against Karen and Communist insurgents in the Irrawaddy Delta west of Rangoon is indicative of a growing capability by the Burmese Army to coordinate campaigns against insurgents in separate parts of the country. [REDACTED]

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Guatemala: David Guerra Guzman, a prominent rightist politician, was killed yesterday in the third such shooting in a week. Guerra Guzman was one of the leaders of the National Liberation Movement (MLN). He had urged presidential candidate Colonel Carlos Arana, a primary assassination target himself, to accept the nomination of his party. A candidate for mayor of Guatemala City, Guerra was the second leader of the MLN to be gunned down by Communist terrorists during the campaign for the general election on 1 March. [REDACTED]

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Ecuador: The government is considering emergency measures to resolve the month-long teachers' strike aimed primarily at bringing about the dismissal of the minister of education. Clashes between student and teacher demonstrators and police, plus the announcement by military leaders that they would support strongarm measures to break the strike, have lessened the chances of a compromise settlement. The government's announcement that the Christmas recess will be extended from 17 December until 7 January could provide a cooling off period. [REDACTED]

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